

NLLN Continuing Education Scholarship Reports for 2007/2008

Myra Domes
PLA National Conference
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The Public Library Association Conference was an excellent opportunity to acquire new perspectives on varied topics of concern for our library. Over nine hundred public librarians in one place is in itself amazing to me, but that was only a minor thing when considering the many aspects of the whole conference. A few are listed.

Workshops - The workshop programs were organized into eight tracks. This was helpful as you could pick them by your job, interest, or to get out of your comfort zone. The workshops I attended were from marketing, serving adults, technology and collection/tech services. An area of concern for our library is serving teens so I choose a couple from this area and saw a need to include more items and programming that better serve this age group. The workshops were the most important facet of the conference and I now need to share them with my co-workers and get busy and use these new ideas to better serve all our library patrons. My main problem is where to start!

Vendors - Vendors ranged from the U.S. Census Bureau, books in Chinese, data bases, software, various media, diverse library furniture and fixtures, and of course books and authors. Eight hundred plus vendors and only one of me just didn't feel fair, but I visited as many as time allowed and enjoyed this time of discovery. Plus I gathered a few free items to share with the staff at home.

Luncheons - These informed, entertained and also allowed time to visit and get to know other librarians from different states. It was fun to share and learn from each one.

Documentary - Remote Access: Distant Libraries of the World - I never realized that libraries were: elephants outfitted to carry solar panels to power computers for patrons, books spread on blankets under canopies, bookmobiles complete with computers and solar panels which were carts pulled by donkeys, or a librarian who built her house and part of it was the library. Stories of a penny library were told but not seen. The penny library is a person with books who stops in a town and for a penny you can read books for the couple hours that the library stays.

Readers Theater - The Readers Theater was new this year and it was a delightful way to get to know the authors and some of their books. This is a great way to sell reluctant or eager readers on a new book or author.

Overall I was impressed by the organization and efficiency of the whole conference. (Once we figured out that M for mezzanine was down not up) We stayed in a hotel in the suburbs and the busses were very convenient. Each of these made a great conference even better.

I greatly appreciate the scholarship money to attend the PLA Conference.

Thank you. Myra Domes

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